

and at the same time numbers of Nurses working in the Metropolis are constantly complaining of the lack of employment. We fear the difficulty of obtaining Nurses already trained in country Institutions is that the fees charged and obtainable in London are *double* those charged in the country, and, in consequence, Nurses flock to London from many large country centres, hoping to obtain the two and three guinea fees. We think there is but one method of obtaining well-qualified Nurses in the country, and that is to raise the salary usually offered, and to charge the public higher fees. The question is, can the general public afford to pay £2 2s. a week for a Nurse? We fear hundreds cannot do so, and the result will be that if the higher fee is adopted the number of Nurses employed will be less. We think Private Nursing Institutions, unless they are based entirely on the co-operative system, will find an increasing difficulty in supplying the public needs; but at the same time a Central Bureau, under the authority of the Matrons' Council, might be established and prove of great use.—ED.]

GUARDIANS AND NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—There is one point on which I should like a little enlightenment, and it is a point that I think many of your readers would be interested in. I am Charge-Nurse in an Infirmary, a position I have now held for many years to the entire satisfaction of the Board, the Medical Officer, and the Master and Matron. Everything has gone most satisfactorily and happily until the advent of a certain freshly-elected lady Guardian who, on the principle, I suppose, of "new brooms sweeping clean," gives no end of trouble, and is entirely spoiling the harmony of the wards—and my temper included!

She comes in and out, and fidgets and worries and interferes; the temperature of the wards being her special fad. She seems ever at my elbow. I leave the ward for a few minutes—on my return she is standing spell-bound before the thermometer studying its reading as if the whole future of the universe depended on its revelation.

When I am serving the dinners, at tea, and bed-time, there she is at the mercurial stem anxiously and eagerly reading off what it registers, and entering it in a note-book. Every time she thinks it is deviating half a degree from what she considers the temperature of a sick-room should be she reprimands me before all the patients. Now I want to know whether she has any authority or *locus standi* in the matter. Am I answerable to each Guardian for the details of my work? I always understood myself to be answerable only to the Medical Officer on professional matters, and I have always worked on delightful terms with those in authority during my ten years of Workhouse Infirmary life. Please tell me what is the custom, etiquette, and law with regard to the individual interference in nursing matters of the members of the Boards of Guardians.

Sincerely yours, CHARGE-NURSE.

[We refer these questions to those ladies and gentlemen who have personal experience in the work of Poor Law Infirmarys—officers, Guardians, and others. We feel sure their views would prove of interest.—ED.]

DRESS AND UNDRRESS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I know you strongly deprecate the

discussion in your paper of subjects relating to dress and uniforms. I believe the edict has already gone forth that the consideration of dress is "frivolous." Now, with humble apologies, I must beg to differ with the editorial decision, and must crave a little space to ask you whether some consideration of dress and fashion with regard to the uniform of the Nurse would not have some effect in getting rid of the large number of slovenly-looking Nurses one sees about in London, at the present time. I do not want to see a Nurse too "smart" or in any way conspicuous, but I think so many of the Nurses one sees about *are* conspicuous—not from their "smartness" but for their untidiness. The growing custom of tan shoes and stockings is inartistic and incongruous. And is there any definite reason why Nurses' cloaks should frequently be five or seven inches shorter than their cotton gown. Nothing can be uglier or more untidy, and it is a fault so easily avoided. It always appears to me that no point connected with uniform should be regarded as trivial. In the Army it is not considered beneath the dignity of a very high official—even a Commander-in-Chief—to take into consideration the quality and effect of certain blacking on the shoes of his men, and I cannot see why it should be considered beneath the dignity of the leaders of the Nursing profession to discuss the details of Nurses' costumes. There certainly is needed some central body to evolve some kind of uniformity and suitability for the costumes of the Nursing profession.

The heterogenous collections of bonnets, cloaks, and gowns, at present worn by Nurses as a whole, is not satisfactory.

We badly want some inventive woman to come forward with the suggestion of a uniform which *cannot* look untidy, however badly put on, and which is at the same time neat, simple, pretty, and inexpensive.

I am always struck with the neatness of "Salvation lassies" as contrasted with trained Nurses. The uniform is admirably chosen, and is also becoming. Now, if these "lassies"—who are drawn from a class which is distinctly untidy by nature—can, notwithstanding, reach so high a level of neatness, why cannot the trained Nurse, who comes from a very different grade, look infinitely neater and tidier in *her* uniform, which is distinctly a much more charming one than that adopted by the feminine portion of the Salvation Army.

Sincerely yours,

TAUT AND TRIM.

[We must divest our correspondent of her impressions that Nurses' uniforms is a subject unworthy of discussion in our columns—indeed the fact is that the untidiness of the average Nurses' outdoor uniform in London has become proverbial—it is a subject which is constantly being discussed in the RECORD. What our readers did object to—(and we own we are entirely in sympathy with them)—was a suggestion made by one signing herself "Chiffon" desiring that "dress and fashion" should find a place in our columns. Now, considering that the majority of women's papers edited by men deal with few other subjects than dress, we feel that we can safely leave this all-absorbing question to their tender mercies. Personally, we should welcome warmly the advent of a genius, who would "come forward with the suggestion of a uniform which *cannot* look untidy, however badly put on, and which is at the same time neat, simple, pretty, and inexpensive."—ED.]

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